

COINS

Off-center bills: Plenty of margin for costly error

By Roger Boye

This week's column answers more questions about old coins and currency.

Q—My \$1 bill seems to be miscut. The top margin on the front side is $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wide while the bottom margin is less than $\frac{1}{16}$ of a inch. Is it rare?—J. C., Brookfield.

A—Not really. Most collectors want to own bills that are even more off-center than yours. To be "in demand," a bill should have no margin along one edge and such a wide margin on the opposite edge that part of the adjoining bill is visible. [Currency is printed on large sheets of paper, 32 bills to the sheet; after printing, the sheet is cut.]

At best, your item might retail for \$5, assuming it's in at least extremely fine condition, experts say.

Q—Recently I cashed in \$10 for a roll of half-dollars, and they were all Bicentennials with the 1776-1976 date. Is there anything special about the coins? They are all quite shiny.—T. T., Chicago.

A—Unfortunately for you, Bicentennial half-dollars made for circulation are common [as are Bicentennial quarters and dollar coins]. I doubt that you'll find a dealer who is willing to pay more than face value for your small hoard, even if the coins are in uncirculated condition.

Q—Years ago a banker gave us several \$2 bills with bright red serial numbers. The earliest date is "series 1928D" and others are from 1953 and 1963. Are they worth much?—J. D., Streator.

A—Unless the bills are in "brand new, crisp condition," they have little or no value to collectors. The "retail prices" for uncirculated specimens range from \$20 for the series 1928D to about \$6 each for the 1953 and 1963 series.

Too bad, but you just missed one of the kingpins. A 1928B \$2 bill [United States note] in very fine condition sells for at least \$100.